

RECENT CLEAVAGES IN THE  
RELIGIOUS RIGHT IN TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT  
OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

OF

BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

BY

FILİZ BAŞKAN

SEPTEMBER 1993

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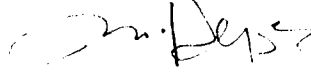
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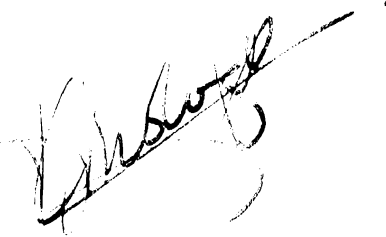
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Prof. Dr. Metin Heper



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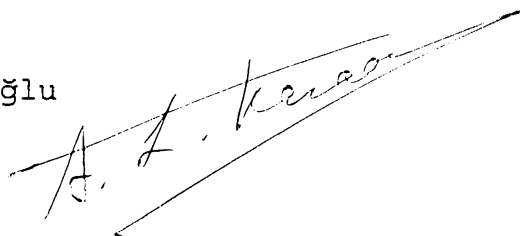
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Prof. Dr. Ali Karaosmanoğlu



## ABSTRACT

In this study, recent cleavages within the Prosperity Party is described. For this purpose, first the ideologies of the National Order Party and the National Salvation Party are taken up. For the PP is the continuation of the NOP and NSP, the PP cannot be understood as distinct from these two parties. It is then delineated the recent cleavages within the PP arose out of the leadership oligarchy within the PP and its integration into the present system.

Finally, it is indicated on which subjects there are differences between the views of the mainstream PP and the anti-system faction within the PP. These subjects are listed as follows: criticisms to present system, "secularism", "Kemalism" and the relations with other Muslim countries. There are serious differences between the points of view of the mainstream PP and the anti-system faction of the party on these subjects.

## ÖZET

Bu tezde, Refah Partisi içindeki son bölünmeler tanımlandı. Bu amaç için öncelikle Milli Nizam Partisi ve Milli Selamet Partisi'nin ideolojileri incelendi. Çünkü Refah Partisi MNP ve MSP'nin devamı olduğundan, RP bu iki partinin ideolojisine bakılmaksızın anlaşılamaz. Daha sonra RP içindeki bu bölünmelerin parti içindeki liderlik oligarşisi ve partinin sisteme entegre olması neticesinde ortaya çıktığı gösterildi.

Son olarak, RP merkezi ve parti içindeki sistem karşıtı grubun hangi konularda farklı görüşlere sahip oldukları açıklandı. Bu konular şöyle sıralandı: mevcut sisteme yapılan eleştiriler, "laiklik", "Atatürkçülük" ve diğer Müslüman ülkelerle olan ilişkiler. Yukardaki konular hakkında RP merkezi ve parti içindeki sistem karşıtı grubun görüşleri arasında ciddi farklılıklar var.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

There have been no organized Islamic pressure groups since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. This situation continued until 26 January 1970 which is the date of the establishment of National Order Party(NOP). This party was the first religious party in the republican history. However, it was closed on 20 May 1971 by the Constitutional Court because of its tendency toward the establishment of theocratic order in Turkey.

In 1972, a new religious party, which was called the National Salvation Party(NSP), was set up to fill the place of the National Order Party. Again after the military intervention of September 12, 1980, the NSP was banned together with all other political parties.

In 1983, the Prosperity Party(PP), a new neo-Islamic party, was founded. The Prosperity Party is a continuation of both the National Order Party and the National Salvation Party. One may argue that Islamic politics has been continuing within the line of the NOP-NSP-PP in Turkish political structure since 1970.

The PP did not become successful in the 1987 general election and could not get any seat in the Assembly. Although it got the 7.2 percent of the popular vote, it did not gain any seats in the Assembly because of the percentage barrier. Therefore, the PP, the Nationalist Labor Party and the Reformist Democracy Party formed an alliance before the 1991 election. They entered the election as an alliance and made an important electoral success. This alliance got the 16.9 per cent of the total vote and gained 62 seats in the Assembly. So it came fourth both in terms of seats gained in the Assembly and its vote.<sup>1</sup> Although the PP gained an electoral success in the 1991 election, a cleavage within the PP, however, occurred.

The aim of this study is not to look at the similarities or differences between the NSP and the PP, but to look at the nature of recent cleavages within the PP. Before dealing with this question, the following question must be answered: were the NOP and the NSP, which were predecessors of the PP, homogeneous or heterogeneous? I could not find any evidence to prove that they were homogeneous or heterogeneous. However, Jacob Landau argues that even though there were cleavages among the party's top leaders and conflicts between rival groups within the NSP, the existence of these had been denied by party

spokesman.<sup>2</sup> Landau also says that while major decisions were discussed in the party's executive bodies, Necmettin Erbakan decided, who had also led the NOP, the final decisions.<sup>3</sup>

Although there were some rival groups within the NSP, they were suppressed by party leaders. Despite the lack of any direct evidence, it can be argued that both the NOP and NSP were heterogeneous. However, after 1990 some Prosperity Party members and deputies, who have radical views about their party and the problems of Turkey, start to say something different from their party's ideology.

This study comprises five chapters. In the second chapter emergence of secularism as a state ideology and the historical background of the religious right in Turkey are explained. Therefore, the process of secularism is explained and the question of whether secularism was successful or not is also answered. The establishment of the NOP and NSP, which were predecessors of the PP, is taken then up. Also the ideologies of these parties are tried to be delineated. The party programs of these two parties are also examined. The third chapter deals with the following question: what is the ideology of the Prosperity Party? The fourth chapter analyzes the ideology of the

opposing faction within the PP. In the concluding fifth chapter, a comparison between the ideology of the party and the ideology of opposing group is studied.

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Turkey", Asian and African Studies. vol.11,  
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## CHAPTER TWO

### Historical Background of the Religious Right

Turkish state has been secular since the establishment of the republic in 1923. Until 1923, the principal component in the ideology of the Ottoman Empire was Islam under Sultan-Caliph represented both temporal and the spiritual power.<sup>1</sup> For Kemalist cadres after the national struggle, the first aim of secularization, which was seen as the most effective way to reform the traditional state system and society, was that of abolishing the power and the authority of Islam and its representatives in the political, social and cultural spheres and to confine it in the field of faith and worship.<sup>2</sup> So they tried to create a modern, rational state with institutions and laws by means of secularization. Hence the series of secular reforms were designed to minimize the role of Islam in institutional and cultural life. The secularization program followed a four-phased course:<sup>3</sup>

1) Symbolic secularization, or enforced changes in organizational, cultural and social life which had a symbolic identification with Islam. The acts of symbolic

secularization, were as follows: the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924; the adoption of the Western hat and Western styles in clothing in 1925; alphabet reform (the change of the alphabet from Arabic to Latin script in 1928).

2) Institutional secularization, or changes in organizational arrangements designed to destroy the institutional strength of Islam. The abolition of the office of Şeyhu-l İslam and Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti); the creation in 1924 of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) (Diyanet İşleri Reisliği) which is linked to the state bureaucracy; the abolition in 1925 of the derviş brotherhoods, were all acts of institutional secularization.

3) Functional secularization, or changes in the functional specified of religious and governmental institutions. The religious hierarchy in Ottoman society controlled both the educational and the judicial process. Functional differentiation in these two areas was the act of functional secularization; the abolition of Şariat courts and the unification of the court system under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice in 1924. All



schools were put under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education by means of the Educational Act of 1924 (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu).

4) Legal secularization, or changes in the legal structure of the polity and society. The adoption of new civil, criminal and commercial codes were the acts of legal secularization.<sup>4</sup>

Kemalist cadres put in effect a cultural revolution based on a new value system, the most significant aim of which was to express a secular, political ideology in the place of religion, which was used as a means of social identity and the origin of legitimacy for political authority.<sup>5</sup>

However, Kemalist world-view could not fulfil the place of a rival ideology to Islam.<sup>6</sup> The founders of the Republic did not pay attention to the necessity of a value system at the level of individual.<sup>7</sup> In addition it can be argued that the Republic failed at the level of basic central values. Each community is founded on a fundamental philosophy, which forms a world-view in the individual's mind. The original weakness of the republic was the lack of this philosophy: it cannot be said that Kemalism had

profound and comprehensive philosophical bases.<sup>8</sup> As a result of these ideological weaknesses, religious ideology could survive.

The secularization process went into reverse with the transition to the multi-party period. As Feroz Ahmad points out:

The introduction of multi-party politics and the competition for votes forced the RPP[the Republican People's Party] and the opposition parties to reconsider their attitudes to religion. It was the RPP which had to take the initiative because many of its reforms during the past twenty years, bringing little direct benefit to the people, had made them apathetic and even hostile.<sup>9</sup>

Because the Republican People's Party believed that the Democratic Party(DP) could attract conservative people to its side, the RPP Ministry of Education added elective courses on religion into the primary school curriculum; it also established courses for the training of prayer leaders(imams) and preachers(hatips). In 1948, foreign currency purchasing rights was given to those wanting to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, and in 1949 the tombs of saints and other holy men were reopened for visitors.<sup>10</sup>

The DP realized that this change of policy endangered their position and tried to protect themselves

by continuing to accuse the RPP of being hostile to Islam.<sup>11</sup> Ahmad indicates furthermore that:

Even without the introduction of multi-party politics it is probable that the RPP would have relaxed its militant secularism and adopted a more liberal attitude towards Islam. Such a change would have made the regime more popular... But with multi-party politics the element of competition was brought in, inevitably making the issue political. Neither party was about to permit a counter-revolution to secularization. But, on the other hand, both parties had to pay a price for their votes. Before the 1950 election the Democrats could make only promises while the Republicans made the concessions; but it was the Democrats who won.<sup>12</sup>

After the first free elections, the winning party, the DP continued this reversal of secularization. What were "reversed" were in fact minor revisions of policy that they implemented, such as the lifting of the ban on the recital of the ezan in Arabic, the broadcasting of Koran readings over the state radio, the establishment of religious schools, and the expansion of the PRA's budget which were heavily criticized by both secular press and the RPP leaders as major steps toward the establishment of a non-secular state.<sup>13</sup> But for the DP true restoration of the freedom of conscience could no longer be delayed and the party was only following a process which was begun by the RPP.<sup>14</sup> During

the first four years in power the DP had no need to use Islam. Metin Heper explains here the reason as follows:

The Democrat party placed greater emphasis on religion only when it faced serious economic problems after the mid-1950s.<sup>15</sup>

However, during the 1957 electoral campaign the DP and the Nur sect formed an alliance. But military intervention of May 1960 put an end to this alliance. Şerif Mardin explains the reason of this intervention as follows:

Part of the motivation of the military in intervening in Turkish politics was its conviction that a number of Muslim 'fanatics', such as the leader of the Nur sect, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, were about to turn Turkey back to what it perceived as a theocratic regime. The secularist principles of the Turkish Republic were being undermined, and the generals felt that they had to prevent this.<sup>16</sup>

After the military intervention of 1960, there was a widespread belief that the military regime, which replaced the DP, would take an offensive stance against the reversal process of secularization and restore a militant secularism of the single party era. But the National Unity Committee had no such intentions and it began to counter this propaganda by adopting a favorable attitude toward Islam.<sup>17</sup> Then, a new constitution, which was supportive of liberal, pluralist politics and not supportive of concentration of power, was prepared.<sup>18</sup> This constitution

allowed genuine associational freedoms which resulted in the mushrooming of a variety of organizations throughout the decade, include religious groups. In this liberal political environment, religious forces were able to establish a political party of their own under the name of National Order Party.<sup>19</sup>

## **2.1.National Order Party**

The National Order Party (NOP) was established on 26 January 1970 under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. The party's program and speeches of its leaders stressed democratic and progressive views but a detailed analysis reveals the party's Islamic character.<sup>20</sup> Jacob Landau describes the NOP's program as:

a moralist's delight, explaining its approach to spiritual values in carefully chosen words, often of Arabic origin, that left in no doubt the party's strong attachment to Islam. Further, its program advocated freedom of conscience, but interpreted it to mean freedom for religious -i.e., Islamic- education. The implication was that in secularist Turkey, Islamic education was handicapped and that the NOP was its best defender.<sup>21</sup>

According to the NOP's world-view, although capitalist and socialist systems are seen as different, both were the same in their nature. Both are materialist, self-seeking and imperialist. They sought to enslave other nations through imposing their own culture and economic interests on them. Despite their material progress, both systems were caught up in a spiritual crisis.<sup>22</sup>

The NOP divided Turkey's domestic problems into two categories. These were material and spiritual. In the material field the NOP criticized the dependence of the Turkish economy on foreign markets and capital, a low level of per capita income and an unjust distribution of wealth, and a generally weak economy. As a result of all these elements, Turkey has become dependent completely on foreign aid and lost its initiative in foreign policy. In the spiritual field the NOP's criticisms centered around its claim that Turkey was the only nation in the world where the educational system failed to educate the youth for national ends and besides Turkey's educational policy was based upon the removal of its own history. It adopted the West's inadequate world-view which had plunged the Western countries themselves into a spiritual crisis.<sup>23</sup> Although there was not any direct attack on secularism, the program

insisted on rejecting any interpretation of secularism which could be considered hostile towards Islam.<sup>24</sup>

The NOP, it was stated, would aim to modernize the country through both spiritual and material programs.<sup>25</sup> According to the party's assessment, Turkey would catch up with Western technology only if the superior culture and morality of the Turkish nation could be revived.<sup>26</sup>

After the military intervention of 12 March 1971, the Constitutional Court (Anayasa Mahkemesi) ordered the party's dissolution on the ground that it was seeking "to restore a theocratic order in Turkey" (20 May 1971).<sup>27</sup> In its place, a new party, the National Salvation Party, was founded on 11 October 1972 under the de facto leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, although the formal leader was Süleyman Arif Emre.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning Erbakan prudently refrained from taking any formal position in the new party. He did not want to recognize the obvious connection between the two parties.<sup>29</sup> Erbakan became the leader of the NSP after the October 1973 elections in which the NSP made a notable achievement.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.2 National Salvation Party

The National Salvation Party (NSP) was set up by nineteen founders, many of whom had been involved in the NOP, making clear that the NSP was an unchanged continuation of the NOP.<sup>31</sup> The NSP's world-view and program were basically the same as the NOP's although the leadership was more careful this time to express its views within legal limits.<sup>32</sup>

The party's aim was to bring to nation "happiness" and "security" by means of spiritual and material progress. In order to attain spiritual progress, the rights and freedoms of individual should be guaranteed and internal peace within a democratic regime should be achieved. There was a call for spiritual outlook which in turn was dependent upon a virtuous society.<sup>33</sup> In order to attain a model of modern civilization, we ought to be proud of our glorious heritage and ancient traditions, the argument went.<sup>34</sup> The NSP insisted that the Turks had lost their power and influence because they alienated themselves from their own cultural heritage while at the same time they had failed to industrialize.<sup>35</sup> Binnaz Toprak elaborates:



According to the leaders of the NSP, Turks took from the West what they needed least, namely, Western culture, which is inferior to the Turkish. And they failed to borrow what they needed most, namely, Western technology. The NSP sees no positive relationship between the West's technical superiority and its cultural heritage.<sup>36</sup>

It should be noted that many items in the NSP program and policies had no clear or explicit Islamic origin. Particularly important among these was the party's strong emphasis on rapid industrialization.<sup>37</sup> For the NSP, the question of industrialization was an important one because it relates to the party's general view of Turkish history: the Turkish nation had failed to industrialize and, therefore, had lost its important place in history. Once Turkey reembraces its cultural past and develops the spiritual and moral qualities necessary for hard work, it will become a strong industrial society. It was almost with a religious zeal that Erbakan and other party leaders repeatedly pointed out their commitment to industrialization.<sup>38</sup> Rapid development of heavy industry was seen as the surest way for Turkey to regain its historical power and influence in the world.<sup>39</sup>

The NSP's ideology was an interesting mixture of religious and nonreligious themes. On the religious side, the NSP which was operating under legal rules explicitly

forbidding the use religion for political purposes, prudently refraining from a frontal attack on secularism and making an explicitly Islamic appeal. But throughout its program, election campaigns and leadership statements, the NSP consistently stressed a "national point of view" and national and moral values, which were commonly and correctly understood as Islamic.<sup>40</sup>

The influence of the Islamic values upon the NSP program was reflected in the party's opposition to lending money at interest. Interest was seen as a means of exploitation. It was argued that high interest rates led to high production costs and high prices which caused misery for the consumer.<sup>41</sup>

Again in the field of foreign policy, the influence of Islamic values could be found in the NSP's program. The NSP advocated close relations with other Muslim Nations and it hoped for the creation of a Muslim Economic Community. The party was against Turkey's accession to European Community. This opposition was justified on religious grounds. It was argued that Turkish national, moral, cultural and ethical values would be degenerated as a result of close relationships with European countries. Also it was stated that the possible entrance of Turkey to

European Community would hinder the industrial development.<sup>42</sup>

One major component of the NSP's understanding of culture was the importance of the history. The NSP leadership was considering the recreating of a powerful Muslim nation as one of its major goals. Toprak states:

Such a goal is religiously significant since, in Muslim thought, the vision of great civilization is closely connected with the religious mission of following the divine command to establish a just and powerful Muslim community.<sup>43</sup>

The NSP argued that in order to regain a world prominence, the Turkish nation would have to regain its consciousness as a Muslim society with a distinguished historical mission.<sup>44</sup>

A second component of the NSP's concept of culture was the importance of the family and the social life.<sup>45</sup> The party saw the family as the basis of the society. It sought a lessening of foreign influences and a strengthening of parental control for the formation of a child's moral, religious and spiritual character.<sup>46</sup>

The NSP stood for social justice and encouraged all forms of normal legal profit, but it opposed

exploitation of any kind.<sup>47</sup> The NSP had been quite severe in its criticisms of rising prices, unemployment rates, lack of adequate social security and medical insurance programs, misuse of governmental credit which worked in favor of the supporters of the government, high interest rates, an unjust taxation system, inadequate low-income housing, and the unjust distribution of wealth.<sup>48</sup>

The NSP also took up the issue of education. According to the NSP, if Turkey was to regain its historical "greatness" and become an industrial society, it had to adopt the right educational policy. The NSP made a connection between the underdevelopment of Turkey and the inadequate educational policy of Turkish governments. For the NSP on the one hand this educational policy based on the rejection of national history and culture. On the other hand it was based on the imitation of Western civilization and technology. As a result, an educational policy which failed to encourage creativity, emerged.<sup>49</sup> So the NSP argued that in order to modernize, Turkish governments had to provide a higher education which would foster creativity and not "imitation".<sup>50</sup>

The NSP based its appeal not on the religion alone but also on a well-defined political philosophy far more

thorough than those of previous parties (such as DP) which tried to use religion for political purposes. The NSP called such philosophy the "national point of view" (Milli Görüş). The NSP defined the RPP's point of view as the "leftist point of view" and the point of view of the Justice Party (JP) and other parties on the right as the "liberal or colorless point of view"; according to the NSP, both were alien philosophies imported from the West. Contrary to them the NSP advocated a political point of view that was considered as indigenous and one which called for a return to national historical roots.<sup>51</sup> The NSP defined the "leftist point of view" and the "liberal point of view" essentially as materialist and "national point of view" essentials as moral.<sup>52</sup>

The first principle of the "national point of view" was to put an end to waste; where there was waste, there was no wealth. Its second principle was to abolish lending money at interest, which made the rich richer and the poor poorer; abolishing interest in the financial system could lower prices. Its third principle concerned the taxation system; taxes had to be imposed on capital and wealth, not on profits. Investments had to be directed to factory building, rather than to stadiums or liquor-dispensing hotels. The state had to provide all necessary

infrastructure services, but ownership of factories should remain in the hands of the private entrepreneurs.<sup>53</sup>

So the ideology of the NSP can be summarized under the five headings: "national point of view", rapid industrialization, historical-cultural sensitivity, education and social justice.

According to Toprak, the NSP movement was an expression of economic discontent through religion rather than purely religious concerns. This is the reason of the appeal of the NSP to most of the voters: the NSP appeared on the Turkish political scene as an Islamic party with the aim of retraditionalization in social and cultural life along Islamic principles. Within a short period of time, it became successful in sending its messages to the electorate.<sup>54</sup> The NSP was electorally successful either in the least developed or in the most rapidly developing regions. The NSP's greater success in the least developed provinces may be explained by its emphasis on the traditional-Islamic values. Its success in most rapidly developing provinces was an expression of some form of protest by marginal individuals such as small traders, artisans and small shopkeepers who had lost their economic power as a result of development of big capitalists in these regions.<sup>55</sup> Such

marginal individuals thought that the disappearance of traditional Islamic community has paralleled the disappearance of traditional economic activities. They believed that their economic activity leads them into a squeeze between organized labor and organized business.<sup>56</sup>

Mardin points out that:

As for NSP support, although there is some correlation between NSP votes and economic underdevelopment, the provinces where the NSP is strongest are not the least economically developed. Its support is found in areas with incomes below the median, but also in the conservative quarters of large towns.<sup>57</sup>

### **2.3 The Success of the NSP in the 1973 Elections**

The NSP's electoral success was noteworthy in both the National Assembly and the Senate. In the former, it came fourth in terms of the popular vote, close behind the Democratic Party of Ferruh Bozbeyli, but third in the numbers of seats gained in the Assembly. In the Senate, it came third in terms of both its vote and in the number of seats gained.<sup>58</sup>

Jacob Landau explains the success of the NSP in the 1973 elections as follows: first, it was indirectly

assisted by the decline of its main rival, the JP, which was on the defensive, particularly in the economic field. The JP had failed in the pre-1971 period to stop inflation and to promote social reforms. Second, the NSP, although a new party, still had the earlier experience of its predecessor, the NOP, to guide it. And thirdly, the party's propaganda was an effective mixture of an Islamist treatise combined with a socio-economic preaching.<sup>59</sup>

Since no party in the National Assembly had an absolute majority, there were limited possibilities of setting up a coalition cabinet composed of two or more of the four largest parliamentary groups.<sup>60</sup> Then the RPP's leader Bülent Ecevit, was asked on 27 October 1973 by Turkey's president, Fahri Korutürk, to form a government. By early November it seemed that the RPP-NSP points of view had become much closer, insofar as an eventual agreement for a coalition cabinet was concerned. Then on 25 January 1974, the text of the coalition agreement was drawn up.<sup>61</sup>

Being in power was especially important to the NSP: it meant the legitimization of an anti-Kemalist party and also provided some security against the possibility of its being closed down. However, there were several



controversial issues which emerged as a result of the secularist-Islamist controversy. Türker Alkan states:

One of the controversial issues after the elections had been the question of amnesty for political prisoners condemned after the 1971 military intervention. Members of the coalition had voted to pardon those imprisoned for opposing secularism, but when it came time to pardon the leftists 20 NSP members voted 'no'. As a consequence, the coalition had almost dissolved.<sup>62</sup>

Several other issues related to the Secularist-Islamist controversy rendered the work of the RPP-NSP coalition difficult, and even endangered its existence.<sup>63</sup> So in the first week of September 1974 there were increasing signs of serious tension between these partners. Such tensions had stayed unresolved up until the Cyprus crisis. The Cyprus military operation brought matters to be known: its success raised the tension as each of the coalition partners wanted most of the credit.<sup>64</sup> Eventually, on 18 September 1974 Ecevit resigned over the NSP ministers' voting in the cabinet against his official trip to Scandinavia.<sup>65</sup>

In November 1974, President, Fahri Korutürk, asked Professor Sadi Irmak to form a government. As all the parties represented in Parliament refused to enter such a government except for Republican Reliance Party (RRP), Irmak formed a government based on RRP, several independent Senators, neutral technocrats and professors outside the

Parliament.<sup>66</sup> He presented the government for a vote of confidence in the Parliament on 29 November 1974 but he was defeated. Nevertheless, the President requested Irmak's government to continue for a while. In the seventh month of the crisis that followed, Süleyman Demirel, who was leader of the JP, succeeded in splitting the DP, gaining some of its members, and forming a coalition government supported by the JP, NSP, the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), the Republican Reliance Party (RPP) and ex-Democratic Party members. The "national front" government, as it was then called, lasted from March 1975 until December 1977. After the elections of 1977, the RPP and some ex-Justice Party members formed a coalition government in January 1978. Two days after the local elections of 14 October 1979, in which the JP won the majority of mayoralities, Ecevit resigned. In November 1979 Demirel formed his minority government, which stayed in power until 12 September 1980.<sup>67</sup> The NSP was suppressed once again together with all other political parties, following the military intervention of September 12, 1980, by a decree of the ruling National Security Council.<sup>68</sup>

## NOTES

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### CHAPTER THREE

#### The Ideology of the Prosperity Party

In 1983 a new Islamic Party, the Prosperity Party(PP), was founded to fill the gap after the closing down of the National Salvation Party(NSP).<sup>1</sup> The Prosperity Party is a continuation of the NSP. Before analyzing the ideology of the PP, it is necessary to point out the ideological and political environment within which the party found itself.

After the military intervention of 1980, all political parties were banned. The objective of the military intervention was to strengthen the state and to restructure Turkish politics by establishing a new institutional and legal framework. So a new Constitution was prepared to replace the 1961 Constitution. According to Binnaz Toprak:

The 1982 Constitution was designed to correct, among other things, what the military saw to be a costly weakness of the 1961 Constitution, namely, the guarantee of unprecedented individual and group rights and liberties in the absence of properly drawn limits.<sup>2</sup>

Also it was argued that this liberal and pluralist political environment led to excessive politicization of groups and institutions. As a result, anarchy was seen all over the

country and government could not control violence. It was not some of the university students who took part in political violence but also teenagers in secondary schools and to these also some workers and unemployed youth can be added.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, almost 2,500 persons were killed in the 1978 and 1979 period and about 2,000 persons were killed during the seven months before the military intervention.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the new Constitution restricted the basic rights and liberties. It put limits also on the organization and activities of political parties and voluntary associations. For instance, according to the new Constitution political parties could not establish women and youth organizations. Similarly voluntary associations could not deal with political activity and they could not cooperate with political parties.<sup>5</sup> In addition labor union activities were limited in a similar fashion.

Moreover, election system was changed through the 1983 Election Law in order to solve the problems which arose out of the coalition governments. As it was specified in chapter two, Turkey had been governed by coalition governments between 1974 and 1980. Toprak illustrates this change as follows:

Although the proportional representation system was kept, a percentage barrier was introduced on the basis of which a party that failed to receive 10 per cent of the total vote could not send representatives to the Assembly. In addition, in order to gain a seat in a given electoral district, parties had to pass a second barrier at the district level. This arrangement, of course, works to the disadvantage of minor parties and was designed to push the system into a two-party model.<sup>6</sup>

It was expected that the new electoral system would lead to stable governments which are based on clear majorities in the Assembly and would exclude the extremist parties, including religious ones, from the political arena.<sup>7</sup>

The 1983 Political Parties Law banned also political parties top administrative cadres from party activity for ten years. Also it imposed the same restriction for five years on all members of the pre-1980 Parliament. In addition, new parties could not use the names and emblems of the old parties. However, although military gave much emphasis on a new start, the national elections of November 1983 indicated that there is a continuity of electoral preferences in Turkish politics. It became clear that there were significant linkages between old political parties and new ones which were established after the permission of political activity in 1983. This continuity was seen especially on the line of center-right and center-left of

political structure. The gap in the center-right after the closing down of the Justice Party was filled by the Motherland Party.<sup>8</sup> This party won the 45.2 per cent of the total vote in 1983 (with an absolute majority in the Assembly) and formed the government. The gap in the center-left after the closing of the Republican People's Party was filled by the Populist Party and the Social Democracy Party, both of these parties later merged under the name of the Social Democratic Populist Party.<sup>9</sup> In this political atmosphere the Prosperity Party was founded to get the Muslim vote in 1983. Its symbol was a composition which is comprising an ear and crescent. The Crescent represents the honorable struggle in the World War I and the War of Independence which made easy the foundation of the Republic. The ear symbolizes prosperity, abundance and peace. Also it is the symbol of the will and determination of the Turkish nation to exceed the present level of contemporary civilization.<sup>10</sup>

The Prosperity Party first distinguishes the term "right" (hak) and "false" (batıl). The term right is something right under all conditions and the term false is something false under all conditions. In this context the Prosperity Party defines the Western civilization as false and Islamic civilization as right. According to Western

civilization, right comes from four sources: the force, the majority, the privilege and the benefit. For Prosperity Party these sources cannot be the sources of right.

In Islamic civilization right emerge in four sources. 1) the basic human rights granted to men by birth: those rights are composed of the right to live, the right to protect one's own intellect, belief and the family, the right to property; 2) the right caused by labor; 3) the right emerged from voluntary contracts; 4) the right comes from the sense of justice. Nothing can result to right except for these four sources. The PP argues that throughout the human history right and false fight with each other. The different understandings of the right derive from this conflict.

Western civilization has a mentality of considering the force as superior to right. On the other hand Islamic civilization's mentality gives much importance to right. In the PP view, Western civilization cannot bring happiness to humanity but instead brings oppression. As a matter of fact, Western civilization has been oppressing the humanity by two systems- capitalism and Communism. Both of these systems are basically the same. Because both of them are based on the mentality of considering the force as

superior to right. As a consequence, both capitalism and Communism are the systems of "oppressor and oppressed". The only difference between these two systems is that the political power is the oppressor in Communism but the economic power is the oppressor in capitalism.<sup>11</sup>

According to the PP there are two kinds of mentality in Turkey. One of them is the "national point of view" and the other one is the mentality of the Western imitators. The "national point of view" is represented by the PP and the mentality of Western imitators is represented by the True Path Party (TPP), the Social Democratic Populist Party (SDPP) and the Motherland Party (MP). The SDPP defines itself as Social Democrat by imitating the Social Democrats of Europe. The TPP and the MP define themselves as liberal by imitating the liberals of Europe. They are basically the same. All three are the Western imitators and give much importance to force. All three parties advocate the lending money at interest. All three support the unfair taxation system. Also, all of them encourage the accession of Turkey to the European Community.<sup>12</sup>

The PP distinguishes the countries as being Muslim and non-Muslim, i.e. as being right and false on international level. Secondly, the PP distinguishes the

parties as imitators of West and as supporters of "national point of view" on national level.

The PP defines the development as a combination of material and spiritual development. For material development, efforts for heavy industry should begin immediately. It emphasizes that industrial growth should be carried out to correct regional imbalances and disparities between income groups.<sup>13</sup> Prosperity should be distributed to all people equally. For spiritual development, the number of mosques, the prayer leader and preacher schools and Koran courses should be increased.<sup>14</sup> In addition, freedom of conscience should be protected. So it can be argued that the party program and publications of the PP includes both religious and non-religious themes.

The PP emphasizes that labor union activities should be allowed within the framework of basic rights and freedoms. It gives much emphasis on social justice, social welfare and political freedoms. It can be argued that the PP has been attempting to reach civil servants and workers as potential party supporters.<sup>15</sup>

The PP pays much attention to the problem of education. For the PP, Turkey's material and spiritual

development depends on a particular type of educational policy. The educational policy should not be only a mechanism which teaches imported science, research and theory. On the contrary, education must comprise the origins of sciences and scientific and cultural activities. Also it should be based on an independent policy. Concerning the issue of education, the PP insists on religious education. For the PP, it is necessary to increase the number of religious scholars for the religious education. The PP argues that religious education is the base of spiritual development. Also religious education will bring into action the spiritual potential of Turkish nation which is necessary for national development. So religious education should be offered on a mass scale. As a result of this widespread religious education, a consciousness, which does not permit the exploitation of religion, would be created.<sup>16</sup>

The PP approaches the problems of Turkey with a medical metaphor.<sup>17</sup> It diagnoses the "illnesses" of Turkey and then explains its prognosis to these illnesses. The illness of Turkey are defined as follows: the poverty, the famine, the unemployment, the bribery, the inequality of opportunity, the exploitation, the subordination, the injustices, the inflation, and the depravity.<sup>18</sup>



The PP also points to the causes of these illnesses. These causes are the five "microbes" of the existing system. First one is the microbe of interest. In Turkey capitalist system, which is based on interest, has been applied. This is a practice of neo-colonialism. In order to produce goods consumed by masses, producers get credits with high interest rates. The interest is added to the cost of the products and it is paid by poor people who buy such products.

Second microbe is the unfair taxation system; taxes are paid by poor people. The state gets tax not from wealthy but from poor people by means of goods that are sold to them.

Third microbe is to print money by the State which leads to increase in prices and the value of money decreases. While government is printing money and pushing it into market, the prices of all goods increase so the value of money that is gained by poor people decreases.

Within this system, the Central Bank is announcing the value of dollar-Turkish Lira parity everyday and this causes decrease in the value of money. As a result of this practice, the price of all imported goods and petroleum

products increase. Parallel to this increase, prices of all products also increase and millions of people are exploited. The fourth microbe of the prevailing system is the foreign exchange.

The fifth microbe in this system is credit. People deposit money in a bank willingly or unwillingly. But banks give credits arbitrarily to supporters of the government. There is no equal opportunity for taking credit. Contrary, only a minority beside the government benefit from the credits. However, they do not pay back the loans they obtained. As a consequence, people cannot take credits for useful pursuits. And these credits are paid back by the money of poor people.

After the PP points out the microbes of the existing system, it explains the raison d'etre of this system: to work sixty million people as slaves; to take back from them whatever these people get; to distribute these resources to the Israeli, collaborator companies, touristic hotels and swimming pools which are crucial for the destruction of our national pride and morals; to destroy Turkey both materially and spiritually and to harm our national pride, history and culture. In order to operationalize such a system, the resources which are

obtained from sixty million people, are collected in two pools: one of them is banking system and the other one is the state's treasury.

In order to collect the money in banks, the interest rate should be increased. Everybody lends then their money at such high interest rates. By means of taxation, money is collected in the state's treasury. This collected money is transferred to the Zionist banks for payment of foreign debt; these Zionist banks use this money for purchase of tank, airplane and war equipment from Israel. In addition, banks give this money as credit to collaborator companies. This collected money is used also to finance the budget deficit which arise out of wasteful utilization of resources. Finally after defining the prevailing system, the PP calls it Slavery Order.<sup>19</sup>

### **3.1 The notion of "Just Economic Order"**

As argued before, the PP approaches to the problems of Turkey by a medical metaphor. After diagnosing the illnesses of Turkey, the PP puts forth its proposed cures. The PP introduces the notion of the Just Economic

Order in contrast to the Slavery Order. The Just Economic Order does not allow exploitation at any level of economy. It gives equal opportunity to everyone and treats everyone equally. It also encourages the useful and constructive pursuits by everybody. It encourages the socially useful economic activities and removes the unnecessary obstacles to development.<sup>20</sup> Let us now turn to how the Just Economic Order operates.

For the PP, the Just Economic Order is a complete and perfect order. It draws upon beneficial aspects of both capitalism and Communism. Capitalism is based upon interest, which is a vehicle of oppression and exploitation, and on profit, which is an organizing and encouraging factor based on right. Although capitalism includes the free-market competition organizing the economy, in practice capitalism does not prevent the formation of trusts and monopolies. Communism is against to interest but it contradicts to human nature by opposing to private property right and profit. It destructs the economy by central planning in contrast to the free-market competition.

Therefore, although the Just Economic Order encourages profit, which is an encouraging factor for economy, it does not allow the interest to serve as a

means of exploitation. It allows free-market competition and private property right but it does not allow the formation of monopolies. So it protects the economy and people from the harmful effects of monopolies. That is why the Just Economic Order is a perfect order which is based on right.<sup>21</sup>

In the Just Economic Order the macro plans of regions and the country are made by central government. Also investment projects are prepared. So everyone knows which projects in agricultural, industrial and service sectors will be encouraged to increase efficiency and productivity. Individuals and companies can adopt one of these projects and carry it out. State encourages such projects and helps the realization of the most productive ones. In the Just Economic Order, all economic activities are carried out by individuals, companies or foundations. State is in charge of the general services such as security, administration, adjudication, energy and water supply, roads, health and education services, transportation and communication services.

With the Just Economic Order, a balance between production and consumption will be created by restricting the 'right to consume' according to one's contribution to

the economic production. An important economic problem, which is the result of enormous gap between the productive capacity of man and his unlimited wishes, would thus be solved. In the Just Economic Order, money is not a good in itself. It is a measure of exchange value between production and consumption. It is barely a unit of measurement. It shows the amount of one's consumption in accordance with the value of his amount of production. So, in the Just Economic Order, the amount of money issued is equal to the amount of goods produced in the economy.

In the Just Economic Order, there is no interest on money because it is the recognition of unjust consumption right to those people who do not contribute to the economic production. Interest is a means of exploitation and it must be abolished. Also there would be no "printing" of money exceeding the production limits.<sup>22</sup>

Credit means that anybody can have the right for consumption more than the amount of his/her production on the condition that it will be paid back. Also credits free of interest are given to peasants, workers, civil servants, tradesman, and artisans.<sup>23</sup>

By the Just Economic Order, there will be no interest, no decrease in the value of money and no banking system transferring the money from poor to rich people. Also there will be no inflation because inflation is an illness of the capitalist system and suppresses the poor people. The reasons for inflation in capitalism are the five microbes; i.e. the interest, the unfair taxation, the printing money, the foreign exchange and the credit. However, in the Just Economic Order these microbes do not exist. So there is no cause for inflation, which means increase in prices and decrease in value of money. On the contrary there is no cause for increase in prices either; there would be a decrease in prices as a consequence of economical and technological development.

For the cost of goods and prices will decrease, production will increase. As a result of increase in production, unemployment will disappear. Because there are no interest and tax, the lowest prices will obtain. Therefore, everybody from the neighboring countries will buy the goods and services produced in the Just Economic Order. That means the real explosion of export. Finally the Just Economic Order will balance the income distribution and provide prosperity to everybody.<sup>24</sup>

Contrary to other political parties, the PP opposes to the accession of Turkey to the European Community. Because for the PP the European Community is based on the Rome treaty which contains two microbes. In the Rome treaty it is said that the basis of economic system will be the capitalism. For the PP, capitalism cannot bring happiness to people because it leads to unemployment, inflation and unequal income distribution. There are monopolies in capitalism. In addition, capitalism destroys the morality of the people.<sup>25</sup>

Second microbe in the Rome treaty is the argument that the roots of cultural civilization stem from the ancient Rome. For the PP, origin of the West is indeed the ancient Rome but Rome's origin is the ancient Greek and origin of the ancient Greek is the ancient Egypt, that is the system of Pharaohs who exercised force. The PP argues that the West follows the ruling system of Pharaohs. The main consequence is to give much credence to force. By means of force, the West oppresses the people; the West can bring happiness neither to itself nor to other people.<sup>26</sup> However, the leader of the PP, Necmettin Erbakan, argues that:

If Turkey behaves in close relations with other countries, a Common Market with Muslim countries should be established. This is an appropriate way



for Turkey's to gain a honored place among other countries. Turkey will be more powerful and it will protect its national interest but we also want to establish commercial and friendly relations between Turkey and all other countries.<sup>27</sup>

The PP advocates the establishment of Islamic Common Market which will lead to rapid development of both Turkey and other Muslim countries. If 1,5 billion people of Muslim countries create a common market and obtain their needs from other Muslim countries, there will be a rapid development and increase in production.<sup>28</sup>

### **3.2 The PP's Views on Secularization**

According to the PP, the origins of the word secularization could be found in the ancient Rome and the ancient Greek. Secularization means that there do exist other people with different views. Their views are not the same as our views. Also these people cannot be excluded from the social life. Everybody accepts the existence of the people with different views. This is the essential idea of the notion of secularization.<sup>29</sup>

The word secularization was used firstly in the legal literature after French Revolution. People who had made the revolution used this word against the church because there was the Inquisition and church suppressed the people. So secularization is a word which was used to demand human rights from the church.

The PP, too, encourages the freedom of thought, belief and conscience and it treats every type of oppression against these freedoms as primitive and as contrary to secularism.<sup>30</sup> But in the PP's program secularism is defined as a principle which is not hostility to religion; on the contrary it protects the freedom of conscience from any violation.<sup>31</sup>

According to the PP, secularization has been used wrongly in Turkey. It has been used to suppress the religion of Islam. Secularization as it exists in Turkey cannot be called secularization but a sheer hostility to Islam. The religion of people has been forbidden to themselves. The PP argues that there must be religious freedom. In this sense, it criticizes the pressure over the women who are wearing religious attire while attending universities.

### 3.3 The Views of the PP on Kemalism

The PP insists that Kemalism has been treated as a taboo. The PP argues that if Atatürk could come to Turkey again nowadays, he would support the PP.<sup>32</sup> First reason is that Atatürk did not support the American mandate; he called for national independence. The PP, too, supports national independence. In Erbakan,s words:

There were people who supported the American mandate and people who supported the national independence before the War of Independence....Now the PP represents the people supporting the independence, and these imitating parties represent the people supporting the American mandate. So Atatürk took part of which one? He took part of the people who advocates the independence.<sup>33</sup>

Second, the PP argues that it advocates the development of heavy industry like Atatürk. And finally, according to the PP, Atatürk did not encourage the unification with the West; and the PP, too, opposes Turkey's accession to the European Community.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Ideology of the Opposing Group

The voice of the opposing faction could be heard after the 1991 general elections. This cleavage within the PP was a result of the wind of change within the party. The Vice-President, Bahri Zengin, explains the necessity of that change as follows:

The PP locked around the mosque. Also the NSP locked around the community of mosque. Yet there are communities other than the community of mosque. It was necessary to open the PP to these communities. For this reason, change was necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed the PP has consisted two rival groups since mid-1980s: one is the pro-system faction and the other one is the anti-system faction.<sup>2</sup> The pro-system faction tries to transform the PP into a mass party with minimum concessions from its Islamic character. The anti-system faction argues that any step for modernization means a deviation from the party's pure Islamic character.<sup>3</sup> However, the pro-system faction control the relationship between the PP and mass media and the image of the PP which is created by mass media, is prevalent all over the country. For this reason, the discontent of the anti-system faction is increasing.

In addition, both some Islamist Intellectuals and the leaders of the PP also accept this dual structure of the party and they make a distinction between "the PP in Istanbul and the PP in Turkey".<sup>4</sup> Ali Yaşar Sarıbay argues that "the PP in Istanbul" represents the elitist Islam and "the PP in Turkey" represents the populist Islam. Elitist Islam is a religion of scholars, living in city, whose social characteristics represent the middle class values. These values include the order, rule-observance, moderation, and exclude the sentimentality. Contrarily, populist Islam is not rule-observance but sentimental.<sup>5</sup> For Saibay, populist Islam represents the opposition to elitist Islam.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, before 1991 general elections there were conflicts within the PP about the alliance with Nationalist Labor Party (NLP) and the Reformist Democracy Party (RDP). Because this alliance was seen as a state operation by some party members. For them Kurdish and Turkish nationalism were created by state as two rival ideologies by means of the alliance of PP-NLP-RDP and alliance of SDPP and People's Labor Party (PLP). Also party members argue that this alliance was formed despite the opposition of the party's executive council.<sup>7</sup> In this context Tanıl Bora and Ruşen Çakır argued before the election that whether the PP will be successful or not, there will be a comprehensive and radical

controversies within the PP after the general elections.<sup>8</sup> After the elections this argument was proven. Although the PP became electorally successful and came fourth in terms of seats gained in the Assembly, the existing cleavages within the PP become deeper. In the third chapter, the ideology of the PP, which is figured by the pro-system faction, is delineated. Now, in this chapter, the ideology and the reasons of the emergence of the anti-system faction, which is opposing to the center of the party will be taken up.

The reasons for the emergence of this anti-system faction can be listed as follows: first of all, there has been no tradition of intra-party democracy<sup>9</sup> in the NOP, NSP and PP. Except for the interim periods caused by military interventions, the NSP and PP have been under the leadership of the same cadre, creating a "leadership oligarchy" in the NSP and the PP.<sup>10</sup> Some party members and deputies opposed to this oligarchy. They insist on that there is no consultation in party. Erbakan's decisions are the decisions of the party. The party's legislation, execution and adjudication are collected in one hand. There is no Islamic explanation for this oligarchy.<sup>11</sup> The anti-system faction argued that the top leaders of the party have not been elected, that there must be an election (şura) and that these people must be elected by means of this election.<sup>12</sup>



A second important reason of friction is that women, who have not been wearing scarves, have been seen in the party's advertisements during the 1991 election campaign. This was done to reach the votes of the masses. This approach is also rejected by the anti-system faction of the PP.<sup>13</sup>

Third reason of friction is the integration of the party into the existing political system. The anti-system faction has been arguing that the Prosperity Party must be an alternative to the existing political system instead of integrating into it. For the anti-system faction of the party, the PP should not be a "safety valve" of the political system.<sup>14</sup>

To analyze the ideology of the anti-system faction some religious and non-religious weekly journals have been reviewed and an interview was made with Hasan Mezarıcı who is a member of Parliament from Istanbul. Although there are different points of view within the anti-system faction of the PP, Mezarıcı was chosen for interview because his views are rather interesting and many people deal with him.

This chapter comprises three sections. The view of the anti-system faction (notably of Hasan Mezarıcı) about the

existing political system is explained in the first section. The second section deals with the its criticisms of intra-party administration. Finally, in the third section the model, which is an alternative to the existing political system, is discussed.

#### **4.1 Criticisms to Existing Political System**

According to Hasan Mezarcı, any political system's main principles, notions, and institutions must be based on the historical, religious and cultural institutions of the very nation so that it can be accepted by people voluntarily. However, Turkey's existing political system's main principles, notions, institutions and reforms were constructed on the European Christian polytheist culture, based on the ancient Greek mythology. Although the Turkish Republic was established seventy years ago, arguments against the present political system and Kemalism have not disappeared. Indeed, there have always been a number of riots, uprisings against the system because of religious, ethnic and other problems.<sup>15</sup>

Mezarci criticizes Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends whom he accuses of having brought about the collapse of the Ottoman Empire by cooperating with the occupying enemies- English, French and Italian. Although the Ottoman Empire was the sixth biggest power in the world before its collapse, now Turkey is ranked 76th. Moreover, Turkey takes place even behind most of the former Soviet Republics, the Balkan countries and the Middle Eastern countries.<sup>16</sup>

Mezarci argues that the existing political system operated successfully for a small Kemalist minority but unsuccessfully for the majority because of its unsolved religious, ethnic, economic and political problems. All parties he says, agreed upon the necessity of political change. At this point, the problem of Turkey is not to change the governments but to change the system. During the last 70 years leftist parties came to power, rightist parties came to power but the result has always been the same: problems of the country could not be solved. Mezarci says that "a ship can not be rescued by changing only the map and compass without changing the captain".<sup>17</sup>

#### **4.1.1 Criticisms against the notion of Secularism**

Hasan Mezarci defines secularism as polytheism which cannot be compatible with the culture and belief system of Turks. To him it is not different to say religion cannot intervene in state affairs and state cannot deal with religious affairs from saying God of Earth cannot be in charge of the God of heaven and God of heaven cannot interfere to the God of Earth. The God of Muslim people is one God of earth and heaven.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, he argues, secularism cannot survive in Turkey and it must be removed. Secularism could not survive also in Europe. There is no secular state except Germany, France and the Netherlands. For this reason there are Kingdoms in England, Spain and Belgium and there is Vatican in Italy.<sup>19</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Criticisms against the notions of Republic and Democracy**

Mezarci argues that republic and democracy are empty concepts. Neither democracy nor republic has been

established in Turkey. He defines Turkish Republic as a "Bulgarian" republic and democracy as a "West-German" democracy. He claims that Turkey has been directed by institutions, superior to the Parliament. Mezarıcı insists that people assume that Turkey is directed by the Parliament whereas there are some institutions (such as the National Security Council and the General Staff) superior to the Assembly.

These institutions help to initiate military coups very often with a claim to "protect" the existing political system. Indeed Turkey was directed by generals such as Mustafa Kemal and Ismet İnönü until 1950, and all state institutions were established by the army. Such coup tradition was introduced by Mustafa Kemal by closing down First National Assembly, and it still continues. If this invisible state administration is not removed from the political system, nothing can be done in Turkey. For Mezarıcı there is democracy in front of the screen and there is oligarchy behind the screen.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4.2 Criticisms against the Intra-party administration**

After severely criticizing the existing political system, Hasan Mezarıcı criticizes also his party, the PP,

first of all for its integrative tendency into the present political system. According to him the PP must rather be an alternative to the system. Secondly, he has been opposed to the party's advertisements in which women without scarves have been seen during the campaign period of the 1991 elections. Finally he criticizes the lack of intra-party democracy within the Prosperity Party. Mezarci, observing that top leaders of party are not elected but appointed, says that there must be a council (şura) and elections.<sup>21</sup> Mezarci claims that every decision is taken by the party leader, Necmettin Erbakan. Mezarci talks about the leadership authority in PP and defines Prosperity Party as follows: there is no group decision but only the decisions of Erbakan. His decisions mean the group decisions.

The leaders of the Prosperity Party have been warning Hasan Mezarci, because of his statements, by arguing that the party can be closed because of his criticisms of the Kemalist system. Mezarci opposes this attitude and says that if they fear suppression of party as an opposition party, they would abandon their views when they come to power for fear that the National Assembly can be suppressed.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.3 Alternative to the Existing Political System

After criticizing both the existing political system and intra-party administration, Mezarıcı introduces his model as an alternative to the existing system. For him nobody can apply any political project which has not been tested on the life of the state and nation before. Nobody has a right to practice any theoretical and illusionary model whose results are unpredictable. He assumes that both Communism and Kemalism are completely defeated.<sup>23</sup>

Only one model has been tested in Turkish and Islamic Political history. This model is the Ottoman Empire, the sixth biggest power in the world before its collapse. The Ottoman Empire model must again be introduced to Turkish political system because it is the only one which fits Turkey's historical, religious, geographic, cultural, and ethical structure.

The alternative model developed by Hasan Mezarıcı is based on three principles: Tawhid-Caliphate-Federation. Tawhid means unification of people. Since races, languages and denominations are different, these people can be united voluntarily by means of the principle of Tawhid. In Turkey

people have Muslim names whether they are rightist or leftist, Sunni or Alawi. Even though they live Islamic religion at different levels, everyone defines himself/herself as Muslim. This is the minimum that they all share.<sup>24</sup>

According to Mezarci the political institution of this voluntary unification, the principle of Tawhid, is Caliphate. He says that since there is the Vatican in Italy, and the Patriarchate in Istanbul, there should also be the Caliphate in Turkey. For him the Caliphate should not pass from father to son, but rather from assembly to assembly: the Caliph represents the religion in his personality. For Mezarci, the Sultanate has no indigenous base, being a legacy of Byzantium, Rome and ancient Iran.<sup>25</sup>

A voluntary unification among people, which is created by means of the principle of Tawhid and the institution of Caliphate, would establish a strong political infrastructure. Mezarci argues therefore that a federal system could be constructed on such infrastructure unifying a divided and fragmented country. In addition, political, ethnic and religious demands and needs of people, which arise from regional differences, could be supplied by means of a federal system.



Hasan Mezarci claims that if his propositions are adopted, Turkey would become the leader of the world of Islam. For him, the existing political system of Turkey is not accepted by Turkish people. Not only Turkish people but also Syrian people, Iraqi people and Saudi Arabian people do not accept their system. According to Mezarci, the present borders in the Middle East, Balkans and Caucasia, do reflect an imposed order; the present balances were formed by force of weapon and by force of our enemies. In this context, the Kemalist system, Saddam's system in Iraq, Esad's system in Syria and Fahd's system in Saudi Arabia are all the systems of tyranny. To Mezarci, the existing borders between people in the Middle East, whose religion is the same, culture is the same and history is the same, were drawn by the British. Mezarci asserts that unless these systems and borders change, the development of Turkey will be impossible.<sup>26</sup>

Mezarci thinks that his model will unite the Turkish people in the short run and the people of the other Middle Eastern countries, the Balkans and Caucasia in the long run. As a result, the present borders will disappear automatically. He argues that his model will lead to the destruction of tyrannical systems in Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and Turkey will become the leader of the world of Islam in a short period of time. Mezarci insists that the

Ottoman Empire must be constructed again in order to create peace in the Middle Eastern region. According to him, his model will create political stability in Turkey, and in Middle Eastern, Balkan and Caucasian countries as a result of voluntary unification of people living in these countries. There should be one state in the region. All Muslim people should live together.<sup>27</sup>

Mezarci points out that the existing borders were removed in Europe and asks why Muslims, too, could not remove them. He is opposed to the denial of our cultural and geographical legacy, insisting that Muslims need to unite and develop.

Hasan Mezarci asserts that if the principle of Tawhid, the institution of Caliphate and the federal system were established, the system of Middle Eastern and Balkan countries would be abandoned by their people. These people would prefer to live in a province of the new system instead of living under the tyrannical system of their present countries. Finally, Mezarci claims that German, Japan, and Russian Empires came to the world scene again and argues that the time has come for the revival of the Ottoman Empire.

## NOTES

1. "RP'de Değişim Sancıları" (Açık Oturum), Yeni Zemin: Aylık Kültür ve Politika Dergisi, no.1, 1993. p.29.
2. Indeed, what I call pro-system faction is defined as modern or liberal group and what I call anti-system faction is defined as traditionalist or radical group by both Islamic and non-Islamic intellectuals and by some party members.
3. Ruşen Çakır, "Türkiye İslamcılarının Politik Krizi", Birlikim. no.42, 1992. p.32.
4. RP'de Değişim Sancıları" (Açık Oturum), Yeni Zemin, pp.32-34.
5. Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, "İslami Populizm ve Sivil Toplum Arayışı", Birlikim. no.47, 1993. p.16.
6. Ibid., p.17.
7. 2000'e Doğru, (İstanbul weekly), July 26, 1992. p.23; Nokta, (İstanbul weekly), September 27-October 3, 1992. pp.38.
8. Tanıl Bora and Ruşen Çakır, "RP'de Birleşenler Neye İnaniyor?:Mağluplar, galipler- "mağlup sayılır bu yolda galip"ler", Birlikim. no.30, 1991. p.19.
9. The meaning of democracy for them is different from the meaning of western democracy. They mean from

democracy consultation (istişare) and election (şura) within the party.

10. 2000'e Doğru, July 26, 1992. p.22-23; Tempo, (Istanbul weekly), August 8, 1992. pp.104-105; Nokta, (Istanbul weekly), August 30, 1992. p.20; Nokta, (Istanbul weekly), September 27- October 3, 1992. pp.38-40.
11. 2000'e Doğru, July 26, 1992. pp
12. Nokta, August 30, 1992. p.20.  
Nokta, September 27- October 3, 1992. pp.38-40.
13. 2000'e Doğru, July 26, 1992. pp.22-23.
14. 2000'e Doğru, July 26, 1992. pp.22-23.
15. Interview with Hasan Mezarcı by the author, Ankara, December 1992.
16. Interview.
17. Interview.
18. Interview.
19. Nokta, November 15-21, 1992, p.20.
20. Nokta, November 15-21, 1992, p.21.
21. Tempo, August 8, 1992, p.105.
22. Tempo, August 8, 1992, p.105, p.105.
23. Interview.
24. Nokta, November 15-21, 1992, p.20.
25. Interview.
26. Nokta, November 15-21, 1992, p.20.

27. "Hasan Mezarıcı ile Mülakat", Feyz: Aylık Fikir,  
Kültür, Aktüalite Dergisi, no.18, (December 1992).  
p.10.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to look at the nature of cleavages within the Prosperity Party. For this purpose, the historical background of the religious right has taken up in the previous chapters. In this sense the establishments and the ideologies of the National Order Party and the National Salvation Party are explained in second chapter. As told, the NOP was established under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan in a liberal political environment which appeared after the military intervention of 1960 and the 1961 Constitution. Contrary to the expectations of many people, this Constitution allowed genuine associational freedoms.

As a result, religious forces were able to establish the NOP in 1970. However, it was closed down in 1971 by Constitutional Court because of its tendency toward the establishment of theocratic order in Turkey.

In its place a new religious party, the National Salvation Party, was founded in 1972. At that time, Erbakan was behind the scenes; and the leader of the party

was Süleyman Arif Emre. Although the NSP was a continuation of the NOP, the leaders acted carefully this time to express its views within legal limits. The ideology of the NSP can be summarized under the five headings: "national point of view" which was commonly understood as Islamic; rapid industrialization that was seen as necessary for Turkey to regain its historical power and influence in the world; historical-cultural approach in which family and history had much importance; education which was treated as crucial for development of Turkey; and social justice. The ideology of the NSP included both religious and non-religious themes.

The non-religious discourse of the NSP was seen on the subject of the economy. For instance, it insisted on the necessity of a rapid industrialization which was seen as the surest way for Turkey to regain its historical power. In election campaigns, this emphasis on rapid industrialization received more attention than questions of moral concern.<sup>1</sup>

Here the following question should be answered: Why have the religious forces established a non-religious party? This question can be answered by explaining the characteristics of a political party, by pointing out the socio-economic environment within which the party found

itself, and finally by illustrating the nature of relationship between a political party and society.

According to Şerif Mardin, the fundamental characteristics of a political party are its capability to address to opinion of national images and means of national development, to concept of Turkish nation and program of national economic development.<sup>2</sup> Also Ali Yaşar Sarıbay defines the function of a political party within the context of modernization process. He argues that as long as a society modernized, political parties function not as a reflection of ethnic, religious and other divisions but as a reflection of economic differences.<sup>3</sup> As will be seen later, the NSP's function fits to this definition.

After defining the characteristics of a political party, it is necessary to point out the socio-economic environment within which the NOP And NSP found itself. For Sarıbay, in Turkey the development of industrial sector has been greater than the development of agricultural sector since 1963. This led to sharp functional divisions within the economic and social life.<sup>4</sup> He insists on that the NOP, which was a predecessor of the NSP, was established as a result of this sharp functional divisions within the industrializing Turkish society.<sup>5</sup> After NOP's closing down



in 1971 by the Constitutional Court, its mission was continued by the NSP. In this context, the NSP was supported both by conservative people and by marginal individuals such as small traders, artisans and small shopkeepers who lost their economic power as a result of rapid socio-economic change during 1960s. For the first group the NSP functioned as a means of identity, for the second group it functioned as an expression of their economic discontent.

Now the relationship between a political party and society will be analyzed. A political party reflects the structure of society. So the NSP reflects the opinions of a group of society. That's why we have to look at the main characteristics of the Turkish society. After the establishment of the Republic, Kemalists introduced a series of reforms designed to eliminate the impact of Islam on Turkish society. They tried to substitute new values for the religious values. However, Islam remained in underground and continued to affect the life of people. After the transition to the multi-party politics, the militant secularism of the single-party era loosened and Islam became more visible in social and political life. Islam is an important factor in social life as a symbolic system which forms the bases of both individual and community-based identity. Also it gives a meaning to human existence. In this context, there is no

contradiction between Islam and secularism in the minds of Turkish people who are religious in their private life and secular in their public roles.<sup>6</sup> They do not vote for a religious party and oppose any religious attack on Kemalist reforms, but they privately observe religious duties such as daily prayers or fasting during the holy month of Ramazan. So Turkish people makes an interesting reconciliation between the secular and religious ideology. For this reason, secularism and Islam have lived together easily in the Republican period.

Richard and Nancy Tapper initiated a research project on religion and society in a provincial town of Eğirdir in Isparta. They make a following observation about the togetherness of secularism and Islam:

The townspeople see republican values as underwriting most of their activities in this world, whereas they see Islam as mostly about the life hereafter. They often talk about a division between material (maddi) and spiritual (manevi) domains, and they treat republicanism and Islam as two separate ideologies, of which the former is of wider temporal scope.<sup>7</sup>

Tapper and Tapper use the word of accommodation in the place of reconciliation. They argue that the people of Eğirdir are aware of the accommodation between secularism and Islam in certain areas. They list three types of

accommodation which are seen common. The first consists of the suggestion that some specific Islamic rule was associated with particular historical period and other Islamic values are appropriate today: for instance the Prophet prohibited alcohol because all Arabs drunk more and he could not solve this problem in other way. In fact, Islam favors moderation in all things.<sup>8</sup>

A second type of accommodation involves the argument that the secular republican institutions function in exactly the same way as the Islamic institutions. So the former can substitute the later: for example, people know that income and taxes paid to the state to support hospitals, education, the salaries of religious teachers and so on, and thus replace Islamic alms and tithes.<sup>9</sup>

A third type of accommodation is where religious values are rationalized by an appeal to modern secular values. Thus prayer, and fasting during Ramazan are considered as good for the health because of the need of a regular exercise of the body.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, it can be argued that secular and religious ideologies are not contradictory ideologies in the minds of the Turkish people. In the mean time, the NSP

was legitimized itself by means of the support of the Turkish people. So it could not survive in the Turkish political structure unless it articulated the Turkish social structure. If the NSP's ideology include only religious themes, it could not easily get a support from the people. Therefore, it is not contradictory that the NSP's ideology include both religious and non-religious themes.

At this point it is necessary to deal with the İltar Turan's observations, which are helpful to understand the question of why religious forces have established a non-religious party, about the role of religion as a political ideology in Turkey. First, religion is the one of the elements of a political counter-culture. The content of this culture has varied parallel to social and economic changes in society. This counter-culture has attracted individuals who have been unable to cope with change and have been pushed into marginal status in society.<sup>11</sup>

Secondly, the political ideologies, which are permeated by religious values, are not necessarily homogeneous. Although there may be consensus among them that religious values should be given a greater place in political life, questions on which values, to what extent,

and in what ways, are answered differently among different groups.<sup>12</sup>

Thirdly, the presence of competitive politics in society has reduced the militant secularism of the central government. Because all major political parties have adopted a more tolerant attitude towards the public role of religion. As a result, the role of religion as a political ideology has declined considerably.<sup>13</sup>

The NSP gained an important electoral success in the 1973 elections. Then it took part in coalition governments between 1974 and 1977. So it was legitimized the religious party in Turkish politics and it provided security against its being closed down. But after the military intervention of September 12, 1980, the NSP was banned, together with all other political parties.

The Prosperity Party, a new Islamic party, was established in 1983 to obtain the Muslim vote. The PP is a continuation of the NSP. Its leader is again Necmettin Erbakan.

After 1990, some PP members and deputies who have radical views about their party and the problems of Turkey,

started to express views different from their party's ideology. This had not been seen either within the NOP or within the NSP. Although there were some rival groups within the NSP, they were suppressed by party leaders.

It is now in order to turn to the differences between the ideology of the Prosperity Party and the ideology of the anti-system faction within it. The mainstream PP does not introduce radical reforms to change the existing political system but offers some solutions to treat the illnesses of the system if one uses a medical metaphor. For instance the mainstream PP argues that the interest, the foreign exchange and fiduciary note issue must be abolished because they led to create unemployment, inflation and poverty. In addition, unfair taxation system and credit system should be revamped. The state should levy tax from wealth not from income and credit must be given to people who will use it for socially useful pursuits and not to a few people supporting the government. Also credit should not be given to people who invest it in touristic hotels and swimming pools which leads to the destruction of national pride and morals. As a result it can be said that the criticisms of the mainstream PP are based on economic deficiencies of the prevailing system. However, the mainstream PP does not direct any criticisms to the

political system. The reason of this attitude among the party leaders is that still there is a fear that their party might be closed down so they make criticisms to the economic system only. As other opposition parties make criticisms on the economy there is no difference between other opposition parties and the mainstream PP. This means that there is no risk for being closed down by the Constitutional Court.

The anti-system faction does not make criticisms on the existing economic system. It offers radical solutions to change the political system. For example, it proposes to remove the existing borders between Turkey, Caucasia, Balkan and the Middle Eastern countries. Also it suggests the removal of the republic and the establishment of Caliphate.

While the mainstream PP is offering an alternative economic system which is called the "Just Economic Order", the anti-system faction offers an alternative political system which is based on the principles of Tawhid-Caliphate-Federation. This difference is also seen in their criticisms against capitalism and communism. The mainstream PP argues that both capitalism and Communism have been defeated in economical sense. But for the anti-system faction only Communism has been defeated in a political sense.

However, the party program defines the secularism as a principle which is not hostility to religion, on the contrary it protects the freedom of conscience from any violation.

Contrary to the mainstream PP, the anti-system faction defines secularism as polytheism which cannot be compatible with Turkey's culture and belief system. The group argues that it is not different to say religion cannot intervene in state affairs and state cannot deal with religious affairs from saying God of Earth cannot be in charge of God of heaven and God of heaven cannot interfere to God of Earth. God of Muslim people is one God of both earth and heaven. Therefore, secularism cannot survive in Turkey and it must be abandoned.

There is a similarity between the mainstream PP and the anti-system faction only on the subject of accession of Turkey to the European Community. Both factions oppose to the accession of Turkey to the European Community.

However, there is a difference between the mainstream PP and the anti-system faction about the relationship with other Muslim countries. The mainstream PP argues that Turkey will be leader of the world of Islam in



the Just Economic Order. But it proposes an economic unity rather than political unity of Muslim countries and formation of an Islamic Common Market.

On the contrary, the anti-system faction talks about the political unity of Muslim countries by removing the existing borders between Turkey, Caucasia, Balkan and Middle Eastern countries. It proposes a political unity, naturally there will be an economic unity later on. In this sense the mainstream PP is more nationalist than the radical group. Of course, this is an important difference from the anti-system faction.

The change within the PP and its outcome, i.e the cleavage between the anti-system faction and the mainstream PP, is the product of the social and cultural changes which Turkey has undergone especially in the last decade. Since 1980 people have migrated from rural to urban centers. It is seen a psychological depression and an identity crisis among these urban migrants who feel themselves as marginal individuals in the existing system. That's why, they behave reactionary to this system. The PP is seen as a party that proposes an alternative system and solves the socio-economic problems of the country. For this reason, the urban migrants turn towards the politics of the PP.

Meanwhile, the PP realized that it could not reach to the mass with its strict anti-secular policies. So it adopted different kinds of propaganda methods. Its application was seen during the election campaigns of the 1991 general elections: women, who have not been wearing scarves, were seen in the party's advertisements. By this method, the PP aimed to reach the votes of mass. It became successful in the 1991 general elections and increased its vote.

The urban migrants demand only concrete solutions to their socio-economic problems. They do not want to live in a system which is ordered by Islamic rules and values. Because as is argued earlier secular and religious ideologies are not contradictory ideologies in the minds of the Turkish people. Also they are aware of the accommodation between secularism and Islam in certain areas.

So if the mainstream PP produces concrete policies to solve the socio-economic problems of the country, it will take an important place within the Turkish political life. First of all, the PP must give a meaning to the concept of the Just Economic Order. Because even Islamic intellectuals argue that the Just Economic Order is an empty concept.

I argue that the anti-system faction would leave the party because it could not express itself within the PP under these conditions. If they leave the party, they would not form another pure Islamic party. Because it is not a homogeneous group but there are different points of view within the group.

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2. Şerif Mardin, "Modern Türkiye'de Din", in Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset, Mümtaz'er Türköne and Tuncay Önder, eds. (İstanbul:İletişim Yayınları, 1991). p.112.
3. Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı(İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1985). p.43.
4. Ibid., pp.94-96.
5. Ibid., p.99.
6. Binnaz Toprak, "Religious Right", in Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives, Irvin Cemil Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak, eds. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). p.221.
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- 8-9-10. Ibid., p.65.

11. İltis Turan, "Religion and Political Culture in Turkey", p.46.
12. Ibid., pp.46-47.
13. Ibid., p.47.

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